

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-10 (canceled)

11. (new) A drawing furnace for manufacturing optical fiber of a substantially vertical fiber preform, the drawing furnace comprising:

a heating element surrounding the fiber preform, for heating the fiber preform;

an outside insulating layer of the heating element;

a frame part of the drawing furnace in order to place said heating element and said insulating layer in the drawing furnace;

a cover part in order to close the area between said heating element and said frame part to insulate the insulating layer and/or the area surrounding the insulating layer from the gas flow surrounding the fiber preform; and

a gas tube fitted between said cover part and said heating element in order to feed gas to the gas area surrounding the fiber preform;

wherein the cover part is further fitted mobile in relation to the frame when the length of the heating element changes in such a manner that a force, which is substantially constant and seals the gas tube to the end of the heating element, is directed at said gas tube in all modes of operation of the drawing furnace.

12. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 11, wherein the force between the

cover part and the heating element can be adjusted.

13. (new) The drawing furnace according to the claim 11, wherein the drawing furnace comprises fastening means for pressing the cover part substantially with a constant force towards the heating element.

14. (new) The drawing furnace according to the claim 12, wherein the drawing furnace comprises fastening means for pressing the cover part substantially with a constant force towards the heating element.

15. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 13, wherein one or more springs or the like are used as fastening means.

16. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 14, wherein one or more springs or the like are used as fastening means.

17. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 13, wherein one or more means, whose pressing force is created with gravity, are used as fastening means.

18. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 11, wherein the gas tube comprises one or more outer tubes and one or more inner tubes arranged inside the outer tube, which said outer tubes and inner tubes are arranged concentrically in relation to the fiber preform.

19. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 11, wherein the gas flow to the gas space surrounding the fiber preform is arranged through the channels and the holes placed in the gas tube, the openings of the holes opening to said gas space symmetrically surround the fiber preform substantially in a horizontal plane.

20. (new) The drawing furnace according to the claim 11, wherein the gas flow to the gas space surrounding the fiber preform is arranged through the channels placed in the gas tube and one substantially uniform and horizontal hole, the opening of the hole opening to said gas space surrounds the fiber preform substantially over the entire circle.

21. (new) The drawing furnace according to the claim 20, wherein the gas flow to the gas space surrounding the fiber preform is arranged through the channels placed in the gas tube and one substantially uniform and horizontal hole, the opening of the hole opening to said gas space surrounds the fiber preform substantially over the entire circle.

22. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 19, wherein the holes/hole form a gas tube between the first inner tube and the second inner tube.

23. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 20, wherein the holes/hole form a gas tube between the first inner tube and the second inner tube.

24. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 21, wherein the holes/hole form a gas tube between the first inner tube and the second inner tube.

25. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 22, wherein the dimensions of the holes/hole placed in the gas tube remain substantially unchanged in all modes of operation of the drawing furnace.

26. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 1, wherein the heating element is tubular.